

CIACO NID 81 [REDACTED]

April 30, 1981

POLAND: Party Plenum

The Polish party leadership officially went on record at yesterday's Central Committee plenum as supporting some internal democratization and at least a limited redefinition of its role, but it is clear that some rank-and-file activists will continue to urge reforms broader than those the leadership now contemplates. [REDACTED]

In his Politburo report, party leader Kania was generally conciliatory and responsive to some of the demands of the reformers in the party. He also accepted criticism that the pace of reform has been too slow. [REDACTED]

The party leader announced the date of the extraordinary party congress for mid-July, and he presented proposed changes in the party statutes. These included new electoral procedures, limited terms of office for party officials--including that of the first secretary--and stricter definition of the powers and responsibilities of the party apparatus. [REDACTED]

Kania restated the party's commitment to cooperating with Solidarity but criticized the union for rashly using strikes, allowing dissidents to have "real influence" within its ranks, and permitting union publications that contain antigovernment statements. He delivered his remarks in a matter-of-fact manner that suggests the regime does not want to damage its efforts to establish a good relationship with union moderates. [REDACTED]

Disgruntled rank-and-file party members will be encouraged by parts of Kania's speech. A local party official from Gdansk, who has been an outspoken critic of the top leadership, said that "for the first time a Politburo report has satisfied us." [REDACTED]

Nevertheless, the debate following Kania's speech was characterized as "great and stormy" by a radio announcer. Some speakers were critical of the cautious approach Kania took to the recent efforts of local party organizations to form "horizontal" consultative groups. They will take it as a bad sign that the leadership is unwilling to have observers from these groups attend the session. [REDACTED]

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Other speakers spoke out forcefully for a more expeditious calling to account of those party officials responsible for Poland's current problems, while others wanted sweeping changes in the party leadership. [REDACTED]

The party leaders did not respond to reformers' calls for drastic personnel changes but instead removed two Poliburo members and two Secretariat members who had not been mentioned prominently by the reformers; key hardline members of the top leadership will thus remain in place at least until the congress. Three of the four men added to the top leadership, however, appear to be representatives of those seeking reforms. The leadership fulfilled a promise by appointing two workers to the Politburo. [REDACTED]

In the 10 weeks remaining before the party congress the reformers will undoubtedly call for further reforms and will demand that Kania's words be translated into deeds. [REDACTED]